



Making Democracy Work™

# Denver VOTER

League of Women Voters of Denver

Summer 2019

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## A Convention to Remember

The League of Women Voters of Colorado gathering started with six hours of workshops over two days at the Holiday Inn at MLK Blvd. and Quebec in east Denver. Seventeen Leagues were represented, and they sent 78 delegates, many of whom took advantage of the workshop training that included: *Every Member a Leader, Community Engagement & Partnerships, A Newsroom Approach to Local League Communication, Get Your Sash On! The 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary is Coming, The Strategic Plan, Putting the Fun into Fundraising, Club Express Demonstration and Leaders Listen and Listeners Lead*. All were geared to furnish members with the information they were looking for and giving them detailed handouts to refer to and share with their colleagues.

On Friday, May 31, at 1:00 p.m., the Convention was called to order by Ruth Stemler, President-Elect, in the brief absence of Toni Larson, President. Delegates were surprised by a welcome from a local official, Governor Jared Polis, who complimented the League for its work and told us he looked forward to our future accomplishments. Two bodyguards watched the audience and doorways attentively. Gov. Polis then warmly greeted several members whom he knew from past encounters.

Delegates proceeded to examine the Financial Statement, the Proposed 2020 Budget, the Bylaws changes, the Program for 2020-2021 and the Nominations for Board of Directors. There was considerable discussion about the Bylaws changes including: clarification of what "Program" means in League parlance (issues for study and action); a proposal to spell out what acronyms (SLU, ILO) mean so that people outside the League are not excluded; and additions to the contents of the packet sent 45 days (not 60) before a Convention. These issues and others were resolved by a committee that met Friday night after dinner and then presented the next day by Denver Leaguer Jeanette Scotland, reaching final approval.

The always well-received Silent Auction contained many

## Happy Summer!

We look forward to all of us meeting again in September.

special items including baskets from local Leagues full of gifts, artwork and books. Bidding was intense during the reception, and delegates had a chance to network and catch up with friends before the Celebration and Awards Dinner. During our dinner many Leagues and individuals received certificates of achievement. The highlight came when the *Eva Fifkova Lifetime Achievement* engraved awards were given to Lynn Young from the Larimer League and Doris Kester

from the Greeley League. A surprise recognition, given for the first time, was the *Gerry Cummins Empowering Voters Award* won by LWVCO's intrepid Voter Service Chair, Gerry Cummins herself. A standing ovation followed.

Next morning, June 1, delegates, who won Silent Auction items, paid and picked them up. There was a total of \$2,487 in income, and Denver LWV share was \$393.50!

At 9:00 a.m., Toni Larson, President, reconvened the Conven-

tion. The Keynote Speakers presented the gathering with fresh interpretations of what Diversity, Equity and Inclusion really mean. Shiquita Yarbrough, member of the Boulder LWV and founder of Families of Color Colorado, compared approaching diverse communities to changing camera lenses



## September as National Democracy Month

League of Women Voters US has joined the American Democracy Month Council (ADMC) in supporting the bipartisan Senate resolution to establish September 2019 as National Democracy Month.

Born out of the movement that gave women the right to vote, the League of Women Voters is the only organization founded before the 19th Amendment that is still in existence today. Our mission of empowering voters and defending democracy puts us on the front lines of civic engagement and voter empowerment. There is growing awareness of the need to reform and support our democracy in our country. The 2018 election was a referendum in support of our democracy, but there is still much work to be done. We believe that the declaration of September as Democracy Month will also pair well with National Voter Registration Day (NVRD), Tuesday, September 24, a day in which grassroots organizations work together to register voters. The League has maintained the status as the largest on-the-ground partner when registering voters in communities across the country on this day. Just as Black History Month helped educate Americans about African American history, so too National Democracy Month will focus American citizens on a revitalization of civic education and understanding and appreciation for our democracy.





## Unit Meetings

Check back in this space in the September VOTER to find small groups of committed Leaguers to share conversations on issues of importance!

## Save These Dates

### Kick-Off Briefing, Monday, September 16

Carol Hedges, Co-Founder and Executive Director of the Colorado Fiscal Institute, will get us ready for one of the most important ballot issues ever on this November's ballot: Colorado Proposition CC, which would allow the state to retain revenue for transportation and education, rather than refund the revenue required by TABOR (Taxpayers Bill of Rights).

Hopefully we will also learn what is ahead now that the Colorado Supreme Court has said we could remove TABOR entirely with one vote in 2020.

Carol Hedges is the expert on TABOR, which was approved by Colorado voters in 1992. The League opposed the measure then and has consistently worked for TABOR reform or repeal ever since.

This issue will be crucial for the future of Colorado. Please plan to attend.

### Tour of Emily Griffith Technical College, Thursday, October 3

Although we will be carpooling, we are excited to have secured a date to tour Emily Griffith Technical College, one of the most successful "Hire" education colleges in the country. We will meet at the new downtown location, 1860 Lincoln St., at 10:00 a.m. for a tour and information about the college. Then we also have the opportunity to tour the College of Trades, Industry, & Professional Studies at 1205 Osage at 1:00 p.m. We haven't worked out the logistics of how to handle lunch, but more information will be available in the September Voter. We hope we will have a good turnout at both locations, however, you may attend only one of the tours if you prefer.

## Want Input into Next Year's Activities?

### Attend the Program/Calendar Meeting on July 23

All members are welcome to attend the Program/Calendar Meeting on Tuesday, July 23, at 1:00 p.m. in the League Office. We will be discussing the fall into winter briefings, what topics we might want for Drinks & Dialogue (Jackie Denning is ready to plan more of these), and advocacy strategy. Bring ideas and we will put together an exciting calendar for the year.

If I have not been in communication with you the last few weeks and you would like to receive a list of ideas I have received before the meeting, let me know. New members, consider being a part of the process. It's usually a fun brainstorming session.

Marty Sloven, Director of Program  
MSloven25@aol.com

## In Memoriam

We extend sympathies to the family and friends of Leaguers **Phyllis Horney** and **Ann Levy**. We were also saddened to hear of the death of Bill Funk, husband of long-time Leaguer, **Natalie Funk**.

## Awards at 2019 Annual Meeting

The first **Suffragist Award** in recognition of outstanding work and contributions over a lengthy period of time was presented in 1988 to **Shirley Weaver**.



This year's recipient was **Gordon Butz**, who joined in 1967. Gordon has a knack for making budgeting fun and has served many years as Budget Chair of LWVD and LWVCO. Alice Kelly and Lorie Young remembered when they served on a housing committee with Gordon in the early 70s. Alice also mentioned that Gordon was 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President of the Metro League, which was in place at that time. Gordon has been Unit Leader of Cheesman Unit, a member of the Visions of the City Dinner Committee, and a seller/packager of bulbs. Most recently she was treasurer of the Education Fund. Gordon was also part of the team that dealt with the IRS to successfully convert LWV Denver to a tax-deductible 501(c)(3) organization.

The **Marty Sloven Mother Lode Award** for outstanding contributions during the year went to **Joan Friend** and **Marge Fisch**.



**Joan** spent hours helping with voter registration events in the fall: Setting up tables for registrars; making sure the organizers had pens and water; and speaking with strangers asking them to register if they had not yet done so. Joan took on the job of finding speakers on the Pros and Cons ballot issues, and she successfully engaged 13 members to speak at 11 event requests. She continued to lead the Speaker's Bureau during the winter and into the spring. Joan definitely increased League's visibility in the community and demonstrated our commitment to Making Democracy Work!



**Marge** is, of course, the

Director of Organization, but she appears at almost every committee meeting and participates in much of the planning and accomplishments of our organization. This past year she dedicated time and passion in order to find the best person for our office. She continued to work tirelessly to keeping us on our toes and encouraging us when we met challenges. Marge has been present at nominating and development committee meetings, and she was a valuable resource for each. She has been a sustaining member of the Cheesman Unit, often hosting meetings, and always adding to the conversation.

Patty Cordova  
Membership Chair

## We Did It Again A Successful Bulb Sale

I always worry about the bulb sale. This year I was particularly worried because only about 50 packets were checked out by Denver Leaguers. And in the end, only 30 Denver Leaguers actually sold bulbs. Ten others bought bulbs or made contributions, some extremely generous. Our goal was to sell \$21,000 worth of bulbs. With a lot of help from Boulder County League and some from Jefferson County League, those roughly 40 Denver Leaguers sold or donated over \$21,000, matching last year’s successful sale and our budgeted goal. Our gross profit will be about \$12,000. Absolutely amazing!

Although every sale is important and we thank all of you who even purchased a couple of dozen bulbs, we have traditionally recognized those Denver Leaguers who sold or donated \$200 or more. That group includes Mary Ann Casey, Barbara Ann Ford, Paula Freese, Elsie Haley, Pat Horoschak, Ann Kusic and Peggy Pitchford. At \$300 or more are Twyla Boe, Carolyn Engelken, Barbara Mattison, Sue Stark, Mary Ann Thompson, and Nancy Ulrich. At \$400 or more are Anne Duncan, Peg Oldham, and Mary Werner. At \$500 or more are Sally Augden, Norma Heinz, Brenda Sanders, and Pearlanne Zelarney. At \$600 or more are Marilyn Barrett, Andrea Mitchell, and Jeanette Scotland. At \$700 or more are Patty Cordova and Bobbie Heisterkamp. At over \$1000 are our office manager, Fran Coleman, and Marge Fisch. I won the prize at close to \$4000.

Donations to Beautify Denver were down significantly but donations directly to the League were up. Thanks to Andrea Mitchell for all the computer work this year. We made a good team.

Now we look to the middle of October when the 17,835 bulbs arrive. We will need willing hands to help count, sort and package the bulbs. Since we buy in bulk, we always have bulbs for sale at that time. Let me know then if you are interested.

Marty Sloven, Chair  
Flower Bulb Sale

## Our 501(c)(3) Application is Approved!

The office received a letter dated May 28, 2019, that determined that the League of Women Voters of Denver is now a tax-deductible organization under the 501(c)(3) section of the Internal Revenue Service code.

Our committee sent Form 1023, requesting this change, on July 12, 2018, and our goal was finally reached ten and a half months later. The committee members: Andrea Mitchell (LWVD Treasurer), Gordon Butz (LWVD Education Fund Treasurer), Bobbie Heisterkamp and Marilyn Barrett were delighted.

From July 12, 2018 on, all donations to the regular League are tax-deductible, including your dues, and any amount over the actual cost of your event fees. In the future, the League will indicate that amount on invitations, although

most events are meant to just pay for themselves and not raise additional funds.

We are in the process of closing the LWVD Education Fund so that the Future Fund and other monetary assets will be folded into LWV Denver, without losing any of the benefits of being a 501(c)(3). Future accounting, tax reporting and insurance will be considerably simplified and less expensive.

Since the LWV Denver Education Fund will be extinct, please be sure to make all donations to either the *League of Women Voters of Denver* or the *League of Women Voters of Denver Future Fund*. We can no longer accept checks made out to the League of Women Voters of Denver Education Fund.

Bobbie Heisterkamp

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depending on the view you were seeing. (1) A prime lens is used to put the subject in focus and the background remains blurred. This perspective is when the League is looking at potential new diverse members. We must go to them and not expect them to come to us. (2) A macro lens is used for a close up view of one subject. This is when League volunteers become part of another community and gain their trust. It is a time to look and listen. (3) A wide angle lens is used to have a sharp focus on everything. The League now has a clear view of the subject and the background that the subject came from. These steps take time, as the Boulder LWV discovered in their outreach plan, but the rewards are genuine.

Shiquita’s daughter, Genesis Kebede, a senior at Niwot High School, formed a LWV Club. She spoke of how she accomplished this feat and gave us some insight as to what attracts young people to the League’s mission. Genesis attended a League forum with her mother and noted that most of the questions from the audience pertained to issues older people were interested in, so she decided to bring a new perspective to League meetings and invited students at Niwot to start a LWV Club. This successful endeavor happened because of several factors: pizza is served at meetings; information is presented in a clear way so club members become smarter about the issues and actions taken to solve these prob-



Shiquita Yarbrough



Genesis Kebede

lems; social media is essential to keeping the club organized; students love buttons and stickers and use them to express their personalities and finally she said it is essential that the League openly appreciates the value of younger members.

Delegates approved the proposed budget (\$294,202), bylaws, program (no new study but emphasis on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion for two years) and unanimously elected the proposed slate. We listened to Andrea Wilkins, Legislative Liaison, summarizing the legislative issues we supported and opposed in 2019 with emphasis on some of the landmark laws that passed with League support: HB 1177, the Red Flag (Extreme Risk Protection Orders) law; SB 181, Protect Public Welfare Oil and Gas Operations; SB 207, the Long Bill setting the budget, which

included \$300M for transportation and \$175M for full-day kindergarten; legislation to curb the impact of climate change; measures to decrease health care costs and increase transparency; and several measures that protect voter rights.

As the Convention was about to adjourn, Amy Sherwood and Lena Brown presented an Emergency Resolution about Climate Change that was approved to be sent to LWVUS, after review by the LWVCO Board. It states:

*The Colorado League of Women Voters at the 2019 Convention, call on the LWVCO Board and local Leagues to advocate for consideration of a “Climate Emergency Declaration” for the state and all county and local municipalities.*

Bobbie Heisterkamp

## Welcome New Members

**Carolyn Glenn**, 3255 S. High Street, 80113, c\_n\_glenn@msn.com  
**Janet Mann**, 36 S Garfield, 80209, jan.mann@comcast.net  
**Tibby Starks**, 1620 Fillmore Street, Apt. 123, 80206, tibby.starks@gmail.com  
**Karen Taylor**, 4102 King Street, 80211, karentaylorphd@gmail.com

Special thanks to new member, Tibby Starks, who has worked tirelessly this past month with Fran to update our membership database!